

Message Text

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44

ORIGIN PA-04

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S/S- MR. GAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

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TOPOL 5

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (PORTER, WILLIAM J.)

SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF IDF NEGOTIATIONS

1. FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE SUNDAY'S POST ON ICELAND REPEATED
BELOW IN CASE YOU DID NOT SEE IT.

2. QTE A TOP STATE DEPT OFFICIAL WILL TRAVEL TO ICELAND
THIS WEEK TO SEEK A COMPROMISE ENABLING THE US TO CONTINUE
OPERATING A NORTH ATLANTIC BASE THAT IS A VITAL LINK IN ITS
STRATEGIC NETWORK. ICELAND HAS REQUESTED THAT THE US CON-
SIDER RELOCATING THE BASE AT KEFLAVIK, WHICH HAS A KEY ROLE
IN TRACKING SOVIET SURFACE VESSELS AND SUBMARINES ENTERING
AND LEAVING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. HOWEVER, THE NORTH
ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION HAS DETERMINED THAT THE BASE
IS OF QTE GREAT STRATEGIC VALUE UNQTE, AND THE AMERICAN
GOVT FEELS THAT IT WOULD BE NEITHER FEASIBLE NOR DESIRABLE
TO PULL OUT. THE COALITION GOVT OF PRIMIN OLAFUR
JOHANNESSON ASKED FOR A REVIEW OF THE MAY 1951 DEFENSE
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES EARLIER THIS YEAR,
WITH A VIEW TO PHASING OUT THE AMERICAN PRESENCE SOMETIME
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IN 1974. HOWEVER, OFFICIALS AT THE DEFENSE DEPT ARE NOW

SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND THAT WOULD ENABLE SOME AMERICANS TO STAY ON TO OPERATE THE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT. UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR POL AFFAIRS WILLIAM J. PORTER LEAVES WASHINGTON FOR REYKJAVIK MONDAY TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON. FURTHER ROUNDS OF TALKS MAY LIE AHEAD. ICELAND HAS NO ARMED FORCES

OF ITS OWN, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF NATO SINCE 1949. THE KEFLAVIK BASE, OPERATED BY THE US NAVY, DEPLOYS A SQUADRON OF F-4 AIRCRAFT IN ADDITION TO CARRYING OUT ITS PRIMARY SURVEILLANCE MISSION. THE BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS IS ICELAND'S LONG-STANDING EFFORTS TO HAVE SECURITY WITHOUT LOSING ITS CULTURAL IDENTITY. THE 3300-MAN BASE, LOCATED IN A COUNTRY OF 212,000 PEOPLE, SEEMS A FOREIGN ENCROACHMENT TO SOME OF THE PROUD AND INDEPENDENT ICELANDERS. THE AMERICAN BASE, SET UP 22 YEARS AGO IN THE DEPTHS OF THE COLD WAR, WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TEMPORARY. WHEN THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY TOOK POWER IN A COALITION GOVT THAT INCLUDED TWO COMMUNIST MINISTERS EARLIER THIS YEAR, IT PROMISED TO REVIEW THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH A VIEW TO AN EVENTUAL PHASE-OUT OF THE US MILITARY PRESENCE. HOWEVER, TWO EVENTS HAVE RAISED HOPES OF A COMPROMISE, US OFFICIALS SAY. ONE IS THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WHICH WAS A HARSH REMINDER TO EUROPEANS OF THE SOVIET THREAT. THE OTHER IS THE SETTLEMENT OF ICELAND'S COD FISHING DISPUTE WITH BRITAIN. NATO REFUSED TO ORDER THE WARSHIPS SENT BY BRITAIN TO PROTECT ITS FISHING VESSELS OUT OF ICELANDIC WATERS, AND THIS LED TO DISILLUSIONMENT WITH NATO AND WITH THE BASE. US OFFICIALS HOPE THE END OF THE COD WAR WILL MEAN THAT THE BASE ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED ON ITS OWN MERITS. DEFENSE OFFICIALS SAY THE MAIN AIM OF ICELAND IS TO REDUCE THE FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE. ONE WAY OF DOING THIS WOULD BE TO USE ICELANDERS IN SOME JOBS NOW PERFORMED BY AMERICANS. ICELAND HAS REJECTED ANOTHER SUGGESTION--THAT OF USING NORWEGIANS OR DANES TO REPLACE THE AMERICANS. HOWEVER, THE OFFICIALS SAY PROBLEMS REMAIN BECAUSE ICELAND DOES NOT HAVE TRAINED PERSONNEL FOR ALL THE JOBS, AND SOME OF THEM CAN ONLY BE PERFORMED BY AMERICANS BECAUSE OF THEIR SECURITY NATURE. DEFENSE OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT ICELAND DOES NOT HAVE A

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SECURITY ACT, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR BREACHES OF SECRECY. THE AMERICANS TAKE THE VIEW THAT THE BASE IS VIRTUALLY IRREPLACEABLE. IF THE US IS FORCED TO LEAVE, THEY SAY, THERE IS NO SIMILAR PLACE TO GO, AND NATO SURVEILLANCE OF THE SOVIET FLEET WOULD BE IMPAIRED. UNQTE

3. IN RESPONSE S/PRS QUERY THIS MORNING, HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THEY ARE TO HOLD TO GUIDANCE EMBODIED FRIDAY'S

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE. KISSINGER

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